

WASHINGTON, DC - Pointing out the continued patience of the United States' beef and industry and Congress, Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno) today introduced legislation calling for "beefed up" restrictions on Japanese beef imports until fair and even-handed trade resumes.

Urging fellow members of the House to join him in "sending a strong message to Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi," who will be visiting the U.S. next week; Costa introduced HR 5696, which will prohibit the importation of Japanese beef until U.S. beef is allowed to be exported into Japan.

In a letter sent to fellow Beef Caucus members, Costa referred to the "overwhelming scientific evidence that U.S. beef remains the safest and best in the world." Those concerned, the Fresno lawmaker noted, "even went one step further this week and entered into an agreement that includes unprecedented inspections of U.S. processors by Japanese Officials."

Costa said, "Despite the compromises the U.S. beef industry and Congress have made, Japan remains ambiguous on setting a date upon which to resume trade." "While Japan has had 32 reported cases of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), choice cuts of Japanese beef continue to be sold in the U.S.," Costa argued, "yet, we have no assurance if and when beef trade will resume."

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